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FROM THE EDITOR | Andy Lien

Disco Fever has hit my "From the Editor" column. Instead of random pontification, please enjoy more gratuitous *Xanadu* greatness. Please forgive the absence this issue, it will be back in Issue 444.

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Cherchez la Femme?

I'VE MENTIONED before that the political climate in the US is taking on an aura of woo-woo speculative fiction, a sort of Orwellian 1984-cum-*The Handmaid's Tale* ambience.

I had that feeling learning that Georgia State Representative Bobby Franklin had introduced a bill requiring proof that a woman's miscarriage or spontaneous abortion occurred naturally—without intervention. Lacking that proof, she could face felony charges.

Printable words cannot adequately express my feelings on this piece of...*legislation*, but it does prompt this question: Why is a spate of such laws being proposed by GOP politicians? None of them are promoting legislation to address hunger, homelessness, or poverty, just one bill after another aimed at controlling women and limiting their reproductive options.

Franklin et al. are not suggesting sexual surveillance and codes of chastity for *males* not actively engaged in reproductive sex. How about a regulation for Viagra—stipulating it be prescribed only for married men, and only during their wives' fertile days, requiring a humiliating monthly visit to their doctors? Or registering the DNA and genomes of all males reaching puberty so that future sexual predators can be immediately traced and punished?

Police and mystery novel detectives always ponder the same key

question: Who stands to profit? The same things might well be asked about these perfervid lawmakers so intent upon the regulation of women's bodies. Seeking votes? Seeking the first scapegoat on the path to a theocracy?

Why do I find these men and their propositions so repellant? The answer is twofold: First, because women should not be singled out for harassment and physical control by predominately male politicians, and second, because, as part of a group these same men want to disenfranchise or eradicate, I am unable to forget the warning of Pastor Martin Niemöller. He varied his objects over time— but never the final line.

"First they came for the socialists and I did not speak out because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist; then they came for the Jews and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me and there was no one left to speak for me." □



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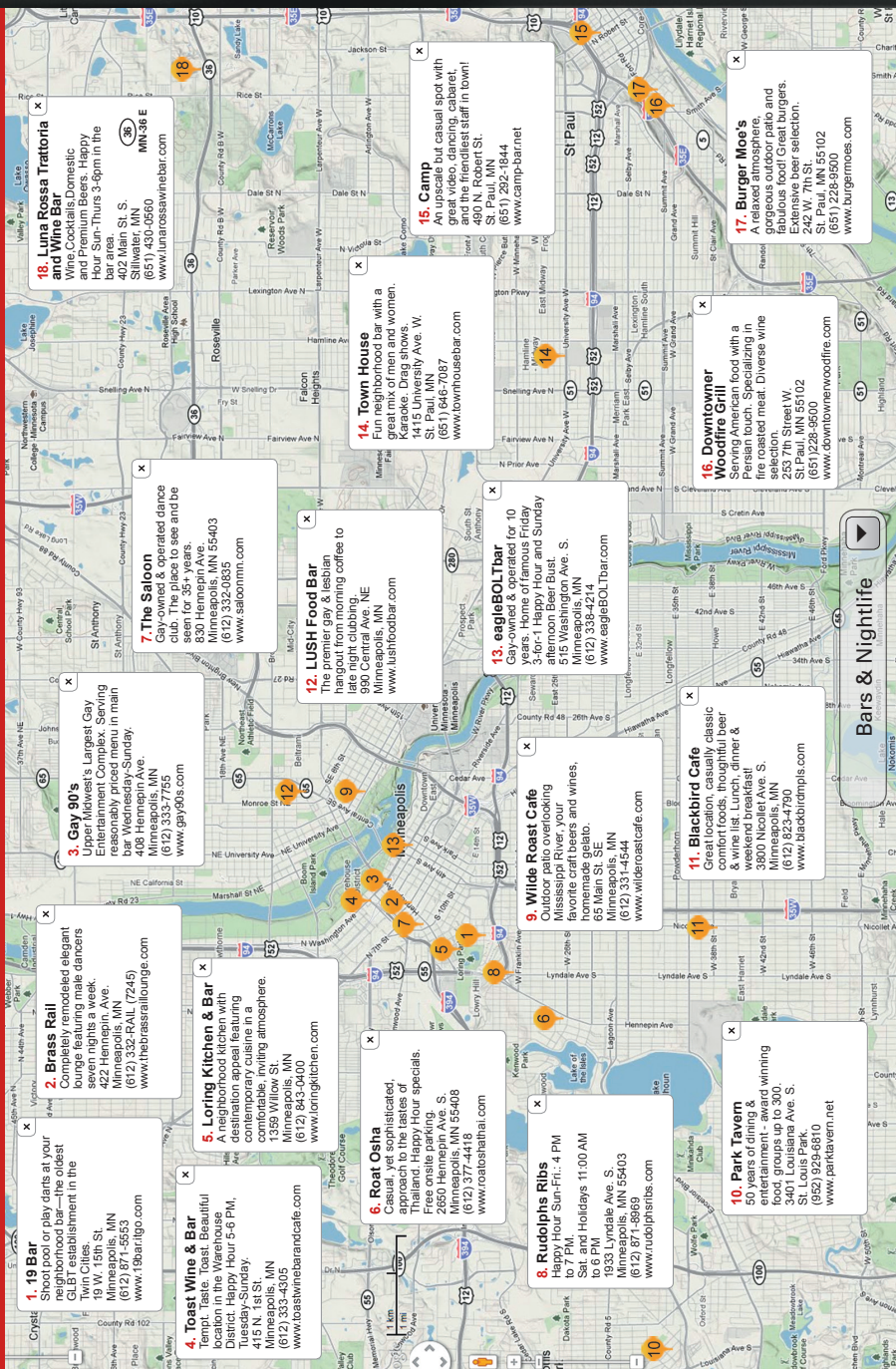
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Xan-tastic!

YOU KNOW THOSE thought-provoking theater companies that offer probing post-performance discussions? Well, that's so not Chan. How about a post-show disco party instead?

Right. I thought so. Save that *Long Day's Journey* ticket for a dreary winter night. Come summer, come out to Chanhassen Dinner Theatres for its area premiere of *Xanadu*, with its guarantee that no brain cells will be assaulted during the run. The only injury you might incur is falling off your chair with laughter, according to Chanhassen's Artistic Director, Michael Brindisi.

Brindisi was visiting New York City in 2008 on one of his usual scouting trips when he picked up a matinee ticket to "Xanadu." "I laughed out loud for 110 minutes and loved the show so much, I wanted to return in the evening," he recalls. He's since rented the film of the 1980s movie, starring Olivia Newton-John and Gene Kelly, and continues to guffaw all the way through it—thus, the perfect "beach read" kind of show that summer calls for. It opens June 1 for a limited run through September, and already tickets are going fast. "When the host of our current production mentions it as coming soon, the whole audience goes 'Ooooh,'" Brindisi notes. "It's a cult film, a party movie, and clearly lots of people know it and love it," he adds.

Here's the slender premise, which won writer Douglas Carter Beane a Drama Desk Award for "Best Original Book of a Musical" as well as a Tony nomination for his campy spoof of the '80s film. Kira, a Grecian muse, is sent to earth by Daddy Zeus to inspire a young artist to achieve his greatest dream. And, since the setting is Venice Beach, California, this artistic super-stretch doesn't include writing the great American novel nor

composing a world-class symphony. It involves revamping an abandoned roller rink into—genius!—a roller disco! (Hey, it's California.)

There's a catch (there always is): Kira falls in love with mortal artist Sonny, a no-no back up there on Olympus, and her jealous sisters rat on her. Zeus (think Gene Kelly) is ready to toss her out until softened by a chorus of "Have You Never Been Mellow?"—one of the original song hits composed by pop-rock legend Jeff Lynne et al. Kira, in proto-Olivia style, delivers a blast from the past.

She's played by Chan regular Jodi Carmeli, who portrayed the narrator in *Joseph...* and Maria in *West Side Story*. Sonny, her California squeeze, is performed by Dieter Bierbrauer, veteran of *Oklahoma!* and also Jodi's love interest in *West Side Story*, where the working chemistry between the two first ignited. The rest of the cast represents a vibrant mix of familiar vets and fresh, new faces—a 50/50 mix, just as Brindisi wants it: "And this ensemble is the real star of the show," he insists—"extremely talented, extremely good-looking, really sexy, really fun." Not only do they sing and dance, but, ahem, they roller skate. Constantly. Even off on ramps and into the audience. Under a disco ball.

Sets and costumes, too, are "pretty wild," he promises—"more zany than spectacular. And



**Not only do they sing
and dance, but, ahem,
they roller skate.
Constantly.
Even off on ramps and
into the audience.
Under a disco ball.**

a mural comes to life.”

New for this show are options for audience members such as onstage seating for a slight extra charge, which includes a souvenir disco prop box (think light-up wands). Oh, and the disco parties: Held post-performance two Thursdays a month, they’re free for audience members.

“This show is a great representation of the newer Broadway works we’re looking to produce,” says Brindisi. Since he assumed the role of President as well as Artistic Director two years ago, he is consciously working to inject new energy into the theatre complex to attract new, and younger, audiences. Shows he’s eager to snap up as soon as they become available include *Mary Poppins*, *Little Mermaid* and *Mamma Mia*. Family fun, for sure, but far from yet-another rerun of *The Sound of Music*.

He’s also aware that “if you have 90,000 square feet on your hands, you’ve got to be more than just a theater.

“Now we offer live music, corporate, birthday and holiday parties, and Stevie Ray’s Comedy Club, which is packed every weekend with young, new faces who’ve never been to a musical here.” But they will soon, if mar-

keting goes as planned.

In line with audience development, Brindisi has paid mind to food development, too. A new chef is on board, overseen by Brindisi himself (“I’m Italian, so I know about food”), who has introduced new bread from New French Bakery and upgraded coffee products, in order to create favorable first and last impressions for dinner guests—“like the opening lines and the curtain call of a show. I tell the kitchen staff, ‘The show begins at 6 o’clock, not at eight.’” Thus, a new salad of field greens, not iceberg, Angus beefsteak (“costs us more but it’s so much better”), and a completely revised wine list.

Okay, a final question: What, exactly, does the word “Xanadu” mean? Claims Brindisi, “To create art and fall in love.” Who am I to argue? Bring it on! □

Xanadu

June 1 - September 29
Chanhassen Dinner Theatres
(952) 934-1525
www.ChanhassenDT.com



2012

SUMMER IN THE CITIES



by *Andy Lien
& Kathleen Watson*



Beer Dabbler **Food**



There's no better way to celebrate summer than with the perfect pairing of local beer and local food! The Beer Dabbler is teaming up with Twin Cities Pride to host a celebration of 20 local breweries and 20 local food trucks at Twin Cities Pride on June 22. This is the first time such an intelligent pairing of breweries and food trucks has been made, and the inclusion of local breweries and trucks makes this event a true celebration of Minnesota.

Though the official pairing list of breweries and trucks hasn't been unveiled, there are some trucks that have created unique partnerships with local breweries. Nate Dogs makes homemade beer mustards using Minnesota beers. Gastrotruck usually offers a beer-braised protein on their menu. For the Beer Dabbler Winter Carnival, Potter's Pasties created a Pumpkin-Whiskey ice cream that was specifically made to be used in an Ice Cream and Oatmeal Stout Float. Finally, Stanleys on Wheels just unveiled their new truck featuring Grainbelt Northeast graphics. Messy Guiseppe will be there with plenty of messy love requiring napkins.

If you can't wait until Pride for perfect pairings, Harriet Brewing, Fulton Beer, and Lift Bridge Beer Company all feature local food trucks at their respective taproom hours.

But that's not all! The event also features live entertainment from DJ Jake Rudh and Apollo Cobra

Messy Guiseppe, Potter's Pasties. Photos by Hubert Bonnet



FOOD

on the Lavender Magazine Stage. People can silently rock out at Schell's Silent Disco using wireless headphones, fool around at Stanley's NE Bar Room's Dunk Tank, or hunt for treasure in the Science Museum of Minnesota's Real Pirates Treasure Hunt. Be sure to mark your calendars

for a fantastic Pride Friday filled with food, drink, and friends. Tickets are onsale for \$35, and a portion of the proceeds goes to benefit Twin Cities Pride. For more information and to purchase tickets, check out www.thebeerdabbler.com/festivals/pride-fest.

Art-A-Whirl & Art Fairs

Arts



Summer in the Twin Cities is bookended by art. Kicking off the season in mid-May is Art-A-Whirl in Northeast Minneapolis and the first weekend in August brings us the art triumvirate of the Uptown Art Fair, Loring Park Art Festival, and Powderhorn Art Fair. Not only separated by two months of steamy summer, the two weekend art events are also clearly horses of a different color. All events are free and open to the public, but the first event is a sprawling experience that wends its way throughout Northeast Minneapolis while the second set in August promises a more concentrated art experience, just spread out between three locales in Minneapolis. Each has its own flavor and draw. None are to be missed.

17th Annual Art-A-Whirl
May 18-20
Northeast Minneapolis
www.nemaa.org/art-a-whirl

Sponsored by the Northeast Minneapolis Arts Association (NEMAA), Art-A-Whirl is the largest open-studio tour in the country. It's a great opportunity to tour private artist studios and galleries, connect with the artists, and purchase original artwork. Prepare to tour more than 50 locations throughout Northeast Minneapolis, including studio buildings, art galleries, homes, storefronts, businesses, and restaurants.

49th Annual Uptown Art Fair
August 3-5
Lake St and Hennepin Ave,
Minneapolis
uptownartfair.com

An average of 375,000 people attend the Uptown Art Fair annually, making it second only to the Minnesota State Fair in statewide event attendance. Concentrated on Lake, Hennepin, and "The Mall," Uptown is ripe with professional works of art ranging from limited editions to one-of-a-kind treasures in each of 12 media including sculpture, painting, ceramics, jewelry, mixed media, and more by over 350 artists from around the world.

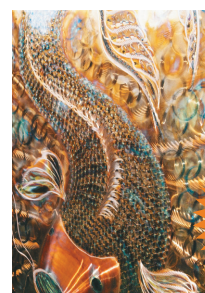
13th Annual Loring Park Art Festival
August 4-5
Loring Park,
Minneapolis
loringparkartfestival.com

Set in this beautiful urban, tree-lined park, booths line the walkway and are surrounded by the tranquil pond, treating its guests to a virtual outdoor gallery of the best work being created. This festival features juried artwork thus assuring the highest quality provided by 140 artists in all media.

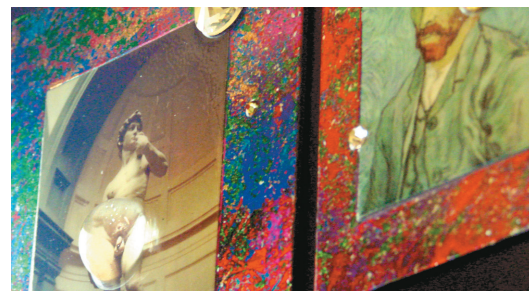
21st Annual Powderhorn Art Fair
August 4-5
Powderhorn Park,
Minneapolis
powderhornartfair.com

Powderhorn Art Fair, one of the finest juried regional art fairs in the country, celebrates artistic expression and community engagement. Set in a pastoral, 66-acre city park, Powderhorn Art Fair features 184 regional and national artists of varied disciplines, as well as a Community Showcase and Group Exhibitors from the Powderhorn area.

For even greater ease in your art enjoyment in August, art lovers can download a Metro Transit Art Pass for free rides on Aug. 4-5. The pass can be used to take a bus or light rail from home or a nearby Park & Ride lot to all three fairs. The pass is also valid for travel between the three fairs, allowing art fair visitors to avoid parking hassles and traffic delays. For help planning a trip on Metro Transit to any of the art fairs, call 612-373-3333 to speak with a transit representative or use the interactive Trip Planner at www.metrotransit.org.



Photos by Sophia Hantzes and Andy Lien



ARTS



2012

SUMMER IN THE CITIES



by *Andy Lien*
& *Kathleen Watson*



Music in the Zoo Series

Music



Enjoy exotic animals and exceptional music at the Minnesota Zoo's 2012 Subway Music in the Zoo series. Starting with Feist on June 2 and ending with Little Feat on September 2, the Zoo will be hosting concerts with top-notch musicians in its outdoor Weesner Family Amphitheater.

Each ticket allows guests to enter the zoo at 4:00 pm to visit the animals and grab a bite to eat at the Grizzly Coast Cafe or Alton's BBQ. Seating for most concerts starts at 7:00 pm. Concerts happen come rain or come shine, so be prepared to enjoy that unpredictable Minnesota weather.

Be sure to check out GLBT musicians Brandi Carlile on June 20 and 21, Emmylou Harris on June 28, and Rufus Wainwright on August 11. With the May 1 release of Wainwright's new cd, *Out of the Game*, this is going to be one concert you're not going to want to miss.

Tickets for all shows are sold at all Ticketmaster locations, online at www.ticketmaster.com, and at The Electric Fetus. For a full list of musical acts and more information, visit www.mnzoo.com/musicinthezoo. Get your tickets today for what promises to be a wild and rocking concert series!



(From top) Feist. Photo by Mary Rozzi; Rufus Wainwright. Photo by Barry J. Holmes; Emmylou Harris. Photo by Jack Spencer



MUSIC



River's Edge Music



St. Paul's Harriet Island will be rocking with the debut of the River's Edge Music Festival the weekend of June 23-24. Sure, we happen to know of another rather important event happening that weekend, but the two cities are close...and acts like the Scissor Sisters, Dave Matthews Band, Tool, Poliça, and An Horse are worth the commute between the Twin Cities. How can you pass up the opportunity to see The Flaming Lips live? Those guys are crazy! Crazy good.

The City of St. Paul has partnered up with Live Nation for a 5-year run of such events, this being the maiden voyage with 30 bands in two days on an island in the Mississippi. Mayor Chris Coleman has said that food trucks, beer, and four stages will keep fans busy at the tune of \$110 for a wristband, with Silver and Gold VIP packages that include various parking, food, and beverage privileges, too.

Special efforts in making the event even more friendly to St. Paul will be made in terms of sustainability and community-building before, during, and after the event. There will be comprehensive recycling efforts, food composting, water hydration stations, ride share to support carpooling, bicycle valet stations, shuttles to the island, and an area designed solely to engage music fans in diverse environmental and communal not-for-profit organizations. River's Edge Music Festival will also partner with Children's Cancer Research

Fund to raise both awareness and funds in conjunction with the festival.

To read more about the River's Edge Music Festival, check out the other 25 bands scheduled to perform, and buy tickets: www.riversedgemusicfestival.com.



(Clockwise from top) Scissor Sisters; Dave Matthews Band, Poliça; and An Horse. Photos courtesy of Paradigm



2012

Out Twin Cities Film Festival

SUMMER IN THE CITIES

by Andy Lien
& Kathleen Watson

2012 OUT Twin Cities Film Festival
OUT Twin Cities Film Festival is Minnesota's LGBTQ Film Festival. The 3rd Annual celebration of film includes local, national, and international films and guests for your enjoyment and enrichment. Taking place May 31 - June 3 at St. Anthony Main Theatre in Minneapolis, the Festival highlights numerous feature-length films as well as a whole smattering of shorts. Highlighted here are five significant must-see films, but be sure to visit www.outtwinitiesfilmfest.com for more synopses and trailers to whet your appetite.

Hollywood to Dollywood

Directed by John Lavin • U.S.A. • 2011 • 79 mins
Saturday, June 2 at 7:00PM

On the fumes of a dream, twin brothers Gary and Larry Lane have written a script with a plum roll for one of their idols, Dolly Parton. Having had no luck getting the screenplay into her hands, they embark on a cross-country journey to personally deliver it to her. They set off from Dolly's star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame heading East for Pigeon Forge, TN. Driving an RV they (named Jolene) is friend and partner Mike Bowen. The journey is also one of discovery for the brothers, as well: their relationship with their parents; their hopes, fears and ambitions; the bigotry they've encountered; as they search for tolerance and acceptance and the joy of realizing their biggest dream handing their screenplay to Dolly Parton. Stars Gary Lane and Larry Lane will be attending, Q&A to follow show.

Inspired: The Voices Against Prop 8

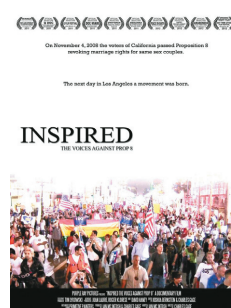
Directed by Charlie Gage • U.S.A. • 2011 • 89 mins
Thursday, May 31 at 5:00PM

On November 4, 2008 the voters of California passed Proposition 8 revoking marriage rights for same sex couples. The next day a movement was born. INSPIRED is a documentary film chronicling several people's lives in the wake of the passage of Prop 8. Arresting live footage follows people from all walks of

OUT TWIN CITIES FILM FESTIVAL

www.outtwinitiesfilmfest.com

FILM



life, inspired to action in ways they never dreamed. Director Charlie Gage will be attending, Q&A to follow screening.

Gun Hill Road

Directed by Rashaad Ernesto Green • U.S.A. • 2011 • 86 mins
Friday, June 1 at 7:30PM

50% of the ticket revenue will be donated to RECLAIM
After three years in prison, Enrique (Esai Morales) returns home to the Bronx to find the world he knew has changed. His wife, Angela (Judy Reyes), struggles to hide an emotional affair, and his teenage son, Michael (Harmony Santana), explores a sexual transformation well beyond Enrique's grasp and understanding. Writer/director Rashaad Ernesto Green's first feature film is an intricate portrait of a family divided told with sensitivity, gentle humor, and a deep understanding of the environment that shapes its people.

Love Free or Die

Directed by Macky Alston • U.S.A. • 2011 • 88 mins
Friday, June 1 at 5PM

Gene Robinson's defining passions are in direct conflict: His love of God and the love of his partner Mark. Director Macky Alston offers the viewer a beautifully crafted cinematic presentation and a voyeuristic interaction with Bishop Gene Robinson and his life as an activist, his work in the church and at home with his partner Mark and their family. Winner of Special Jury Prize and nominee for Grand Jury Prize (Documentary) at 2012 Sundance Film Festival. Director Macky Alston will be attending, Q&A to follow screening.

America's Most Unwanted

Directed by Shani Heckman • U.S.A. • 2012 • 22 mins
Thursday, May 31 at 7:30PM

50% of the ticket revenue will be donated to GLBT Host Home Program
A tale of endearment, America's Most Unwanted provides a candid glimpse into the lives of LGBT foster youth filtered through a lens of hope. A panel discussion with GLBT Host Home Program will follow screening.

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Food Trucks

Trying to keep track of all these food trucks is surprisingly similar to playing whack-a-mole. Every time I think I've got them all down, there's another one! I look in one direction and three others appear behind me. They're everywhere!

The trucks mostly stick together in downtown Minneapolis, mainly along Marquette Avenue, or in downtown St. Paul, at Rice or Mears Park. On special days St. Paul has a few Food Truck Courts (follow them on Twitter with #FoodTruckCourt) the original on Wednesdays, another on Mondays, the Capitol Truck Brigade and a brand spanking new gathering in downtown St. Paul just off Kellogg and Robert that they are calling Lunch by the River. Most of the trucks gathered here are either new or had a late start last year.

The trucks include **Messy Giuseppe**, **Neato's Burgers**, **the Cave Café**, **Home Street Home**, **A Cupcake Social** and **Potter's Pasties**.

The pasties are the veterans. Cornish pies are packed with various meat offerings that range from traditional steak and potatoes to more creative offerings like a slow roasted duck or Thai red curry vegetarian (\$6-8.) My favorite items from these kids are the sausage roll, sweet Italian sausage and gooey cheese inside their crispy crust (\$6), and a Vietnamese iced coffee. Owner Alex Duncan used to live in Vietnam and longed for proper Vietnamese coffee, spiked with condensed milk. "I live on these," he said. For only \$3, I could, too.

Neato's Burgers was partially inspired by the loss of Porky's Drive In. Truck owners Tony Guiterrez and Neal Lenzmeier, self-described "good Midway boys," were saddened by the loss of the neighborhood institution, known for their burgers. The two knew they wanted to do a truck, so why not fill the void of a great drive-in style burger? Alongside the meat treat, they added some duck fat fried fresh French fries. When dunked in the fresh aioli sauce, they are life-altering in a way that only the simplest foods can be.

The Cave Café is described as Afro-Italian fusion food. Chef Teddy whips up a variety of curries, gyros, spinach tibise, wraps, sandwiches, and burgers. The portions are ginormous and the vibrant curry is a great way to wake up a snoozy palate. Served with hot pita wedges, it's only as hot as the diner requests it. (I went super hot, and the hot sauce served with it was phenomenal.)

A Cupcake Social brings an elegant little bit of sass to the party.

POTTER'S PASTIES



Photos by Hubert Bonnet

Now many have declared the cupcake trend dead. It had a good life, beginning somewhere around Carrie Bradshaw visiting Magnolia fifteen hairdos ago. Still, is it ever really wrong to love just a little cake? These cupcakes are not to be dismissed. The flavors change weekly, so there's always something new to try. The cake is beautifully textured, deliciously moist and the butter cream frosting is wonderfully buttery. They walk the frosted line between sweet and saccha- ➔

Continued on page 30

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f t

SLICE



Photos by Hubert Bonnet

rine with expert ease. Suzette Herr and Jess Stone are two talented ladies. They also do catering and, oh, look at that—it's the very beginning of wedding season. Do with that information what you will.

Home Street Home's truck is the leader of this new food court. Their truck specializes in scratch cooking using sustainable foods. The grass-fed burger is a specialty, and anything featuring some of their braised meats is worth at least one order. The crowd-pleaser is the simple goo-a-licious grilled

cheese, spiked with a sweet-tart raspberry jalepeno jam. Destiny Buron, who co-owns the truck with Daniel Kidd, says that the trucks collected at the new food court were all relatively new to the scene and that they mostly work with local ingredients when possible. She's clearly passionate about sustainable, responsibly raised foods.

Parked across from the Mississippi River with plenty of space to sit, eat, and savor the musicians that have joined this crew, it's an idyllic summer picnic.

A CUPCAKE SOCIAL



OTHER TRUCKS OF NOTE:

There are so many that are so good, but one of the stand out veterans that needs to be experienced is **Sameh Wadi's World Street Kitchen**. Follow them on Twitter at @eatwsk1. The Yummy bowl is a pile of tasty, luscious, loveliness and must be savored. Keep an eye out for Mayor Ryback-this is one of his favorite lunch time spots.

The truck I'm most excited to see this season isn't out just yet. **Foxy** ➡

Continued on page 31

TOAST

wine bar & cafe

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Photos by Hubert Bonnet

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of thing I dream about on long winter nights. Add in a little kombucha or a bike-pedal-powered smoothie, and you'll feel heartily quenched down to your soul. ◻



NEWSY BITS

New restaurants of 2012 continue to pop up. The last two weeks saw the entrance of **George and the Dragon** in the old Blackbird building – a Public House serving plenty of taps and comforting foods with an English bent. Look for a daily curry, bangers and mash, and fish and chips.

The long awaited arrival of the **Devil's Advocate** in the old Inn/Hell's Kitchen space. Owned by Erik Forsberg who used to have the Ugly Mug, they have an impressive amount of taps and aim to educate the public on beer the way some of the better sommeliers do with wine. The food? Meatballs in all their variations and glory.

Harriet Brassiere opened in the old Firehouse in Linden Hills which was once Café Twenty-Eight. They're only serving brunch for now, but they will be open all day once the liquor license is finalized. The brunch is ambitious, full of fresh, local, from-the-backyard produce. So far standouts are the chilled pea soup and a life-changing savory scone.

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GENDER-BENDING HISTORICAL MASTERPIECE

By Local Playwright Finally Gets First Local Staging



Compleat Female Stage Beauty. Photo by Dan Norman

LOCAL PLAYWRIGHT Jeffrey Hatcher's 1999 historical masterpiece, *Compleat Female Stage Beauty*, is one of the best plays ever written about life in the theater, not to mention that its insights about gender and sexuality are mind-blowing. It was also made into a powerful 2004 film titled *Stage Beauty* for which Hatcher wrote the screenplay. Oddly enough, *CFSB* has never been produced locally, though it has enjoyed successful productions elsewhere.

Thankfully, Hatcher's Restoration period

gem will finally be staged because of the first-rate, small theater company, Walking Shadow, at the Theatre Garage. Thought-provoking producer/director John Heimbuch enjoys the challenge with *CFSB*'s "very specific historical period with lavish costumes, makeup and wigs, big cast, and an intricate story that requires very careful staging with special focus on recreating historical acting styles and staging. We were drawn to its themes of performance and identity in the context of a historical era. It

just happens to be a favorite theme of Walking Shadow and mine, in particular."

Historically, Americans of today's Citizens United era might generally relate to the mentality that leads up to *CFSB*'s conflict, given the discombobulating influence of the Christian Right/Tea Party/Corporatist coalition on American politics. In 1642, at the onset of the English Civil War, aka The Puritan Revolution, zealous Puritan militarist-politician, Oliver Cromwell, closed the theaters. Puritans stigmatized playhouses

as havens of vice, sin, and permissiveness that could open the floodgates of the imagination, on a par with whorehouses. Up to this time of theater closings, women had not been allowed to act on the English stage, therefore men portrayed the women's roles. (Indeed, this cross-gender aspect would have surely repulsed Puritan sensibilities.)

In 1661, when Charles II returned from exile on the continent, the monarchy was restored, hence the beginning of what's known as the 'Restoration Period'. The theaters were re-opened after two decades, and thanks to Charles, the 'men on stage only' rule that had been the order of the day before Cromwell's edict, was done away with. (Recall that Shakespeare productions during his lifetime had all male casts.)

Thanks to Charles II, women could now act on public stages. The term 'actress' came into usage. It was not only a shift toward greater equality between the genders and a new socio-economic opportunity for certain women, but a shift toward a more realistic theater.

But for every political gain there is a loss. And that loss was felt by men who had built careers on playing women's roles and had kept in practice beneath the radar during the Puritan era. *CFSB* imagines how Edward 'Ned' Kynaston, one such actor who actually did exist and enjoyed great success, might have come to terms with this socio-gender upheaval. Diarist Samuel Pepys wrote that Kynaston was "the prettiest woman in the house" and "the handsomest man."

Wade Vaughn, who plays Kynaston, sees him as "a man who has devoted his entire life to perfecting the 'stage beauty'. So much so, that all of his power, his celebrity, life and future on the stage, is dependent upon his ability to be convincing as a woman. Unfortunately, he has to assume the character off stage as well. The King (Erik Hoover) remarks 'I don't make the distinction between the part and its player'. Two upper class ladies (Anika Reitman and Katie Kaufmann) ask him out for a stroll after his performance on the condition that he keep his 'appearance as is'. His lover, the Duke (Gabriel Murphy) can only make love to him as 'Desdemona' (the doomed wife of Shakespeare's *Othello*), his entire life must be turned over to the

Unfortunately, as Vaughn observes, "when the King outlaws male actors playing female roles he's left without a job and really without an identity. The Duke offers Ned the advice to 'change what you do..."

'woman' he has created. But it's also his source of livelihood and his art. I think it's this devotion to what he's accomplished that allows Ned to live in this arrangement."

Unfortunately, as Vaughn observes, "when the King outlaws male actors playing female roles he's left without a job and really without an identity. The Duke offers Ned the advice to 'change what you do...what we do is what we are, take that away and what are we?' How can we truly be ourselves if we've been defined by what we do? And how can we make a break from something that was, in essence, us? Should we have to? Ned's Desdemona is still Ned. If Ned played Romeo, would that suddenly make him a man? In history Ned did play male roles, and quite well, but in our play he says 'there's no artistry in playing a man'. Ned doesn't see 'Man' and 'Woman' - he understands there has to be a duality in order to understand either sex, at least as far as acting is concerned. He tells Samuel Pepys (Matt Sciple) 'you see a man through the mirror of a woman through the mirror of a man - take one of those reflecting glasses away and it doesn't work.' So the challenge for me has been to navigate these contradictions with Ned. We are a society that is all about labels and definitions and I can't imagine I'm the only one who's ever asked themselves 'who am I?'"

Jane Froiland plays the actress who essentially usurps Kynaston's position. She says "we know that Margaret Hughes broke through what was arguably one of the first glass ceilings in existence to become the first

stage actress in England. However, in this play Margaret imitates the 'actresses' that came before her, making her a woman imitating a man playing a woman. Or as I'm calling it, fun house mirror acting. Ironically it takes the coaching of Kynaston, the man she replaced on stage to help her let go of her 'womanly' affectations and simply be a woman. In a larger sense, I think that's what the play is really about, the breakdown of illusions in favor of becoming who we really are."

Surely, the King's return and persona set the tone for change after two decades of Puritanism. Hoover reflects "Charles has just been crowned, so I think there's an exuberance at court and in London that infuses him, but I think there are some political forces at work that probably influenced Charles's decision. He's definitely possessed of a keen political intellect despite being a bit lacking in artistic sensibility. Sure, Charles is a mercurial spirit and I think a large part of his decision is born out of a desire to experiment and rebel against established societal and political forces, but it certainly helps him in other ways by keeping his political foes off balance. He's not a Machiavellian character, however, because I don't think he sees Nell Gwynn (Adelin Phelps) -whom I think he genuinely loves- or Margaret Hughes as pawns. Being King is a game to be played on many levels but he doesn't play maliciously."

Hatcher reminds us that just because we live in a Post-Sexual Revolution period, we still have much to gain by inquiring into sexual and gender history of centuries past. So next time you insist that the term 'actor' be used as a gender-neutral term for men and women on stage, consider that the term 'actress' represented a seismic shift for women's right to self-determination. Not to mention, that centuries before today's drag queens, male actors manifested female personae with a scrupulousness that disturbed Puritans just as much as trans folk and drag queens beguile Puritanical types now. ■

Compleat Female Stage Beauty

Through June 2

Minneapolis Theatre Garage, 711 W. Franklin Av., Mpls.

(800) 838-3006

www.walkingshadowcompany.org



SPOTLIGHT | John Townsend



The War Within/All's Well. Photo by Dominique Serrand

THE WAR WITHIN/ALL'S WELL

Through June 10

Southern Theater, 1420 Washington Av. S., Mpls.

(612) 343-3390

www.ticketworks.com

For much of the 30 years of its duration, the Tony-winning Theatre de la Jeune Lune was on a par with the Guthrie, Penumbra, and the Children's Theatres as the crème de la crème of Twin Cities playhouses. Since its closing four years ago Jeune Lune's distinctive actors, masters of a physical comedy style imprinted by Jeune Lune's Lecoq-trained founders, have continued to evolve that aesthetic among themselves and with other local actors. They have also been sharply attuned to social issues.

Since last year former Jeune Lune Artistic Director and Co-Founder Dominique Serrand has been co-developing a piece that takes on an issue that both major presidential candidates and parties don't want you to look at too closely or deeply: war. However, *The War Within/All's Fair* doesn't portray war from a front line or political view, but from its germination in the human subconscious.

The idea is that the discord we individually nurse within ourselves ripples into dissonance and even chaos around us. Therefore, if we cannot put right the turbulence within ourselves, and be present to unfettered calm and stillness within our own autonomous selves, can we really then still the turbulence sweeping throughout the world? Hence, when countries are at war, to what degree are they acting out their own population's collective unconscious? In other words, the composite of everyone's individual subconscious.

This project started at the U of M with improvisations led by Jeune Lune veterans Steve Epp, Nathan Keepers, and Serrand. It came out of what Serrand says was "the horrific and lamentable dialogue on the web and on the waves, on just about every topic, from the questioning of Obama's birth certificate to the persecution of immigrants. Notwithstanding the marathon of religious extremists, all more Christians than Christ(like), acting as the great authority on marriage, women's rights, and so on."

Now, the second phase of that U of M process can be seen at the Southern Theater with additional dialogue by Cory Hinkle and direction by Serrand. The ensemble includes Jon Ferguson who has found the experience to be, as he puts it, "very exciting. My character (is) the boss that everyone's had at some point in their lives, that they would love to murder. He bullies, manipulates, undermines,

all for control. He battles every day to keep control but all the while there's someone 'upstairs' with more power. So ultimately he's no more important than any of the others."

In describing his invention of someone new, ensemble member Keepers shares "as an actor it's always fun to create the character but it's a different beast in a show like this. You're in charge. You're responsible, more so than in other shows, for carving out that person's individual world. And it has to be so transparent and sharp. We have to say 'we know that person'. On top of it, the theme of stupidity is a pleasure of mine. Not being stupid or dumb, but maybe saying something awful, like we hear every day from some jackass on television or the bus. That public stupidity we're all subject to right now. Finding the character's own personal logic. It's a lot of fun."



The Origin(s) Project. Photo by Charissa Uemura

THE ORIGIN(S) PROJECT

May 31 – June 9

Dreamland Arts, 677 Ham-

line Av., St. Paul

(651) 645-5506

www.dreamlandarts.org

You may know Katie Hae Leo and Sun Mee Chomet from their first rate stage performances, but they are also notable playwrights. Leo's *Four Destinies* is a compelling satire on adoption, sensitive to queer issues, and Chomet's *Asiamesia* was named Best New Script by the Star Tribune in '08. They have now gone on to combine both their acting and writing talents in the examination of their unique experiences as Korean

adoptees. Leo, from not having found her birth family; Chomet, from having found one's birth family.

Leo says that her piece titled *N/A* "explores three health crises I've faced in recent years and how my attempts to understand why they were happening to me meld me to the brick wall that is my unknown history. As an adoptee who has not found my birth family, I am forced to speculate on where certain genetic diseases come from. In the piece, I took this a step further and created far-fetched mystical mythologies to explain their origins. I based these origin myths on real Korean stories and events. So I guess I'm trying to blur the line between fact and fiction when it comes to the mythology of one's body." "On a more practical level, the stories I tell also touch upon the modern-day experience of navigating our health system. As a woman and person of color with no known genetic history, I often felt like a curiosity to doctors who were trying to figure out why I was having certain problems. In fact, more than one doctor initially dismissed symptoms that were later accurately diagnosed by other doctors, with my first doctors suggesting that I was simply imagining things. I think this feeling is common for many women, that sense that you are Cassandra from the Greek myth, spewing out informations with no one believing you. It goes back to the old diagnosis of 'hysteria' for women's menstruation." Sun Mee's *How To Be A Korean Woman* "investigates the expectations I was met with when I found my Korean birth family. I was raised in the US by a far-left feminist mother who raised me to be an absolute tomboy. My American mother proudly encouraged me ➡

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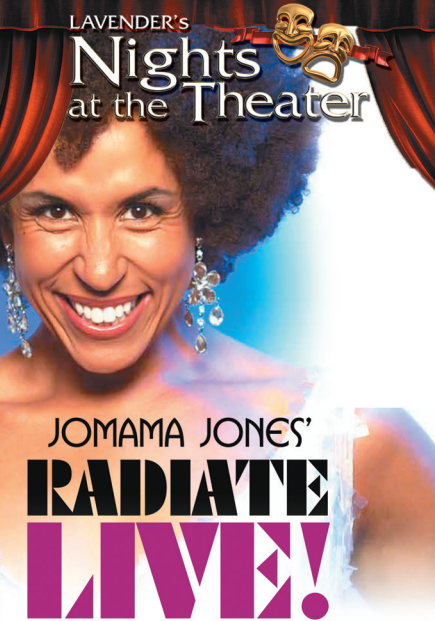
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away from wearing dresses and refused to purchase make-up and Barbies for me because of their sexist representation of women. She wanted me to be fiercely independent, outspoken, and fearless.”

“Conversely, the women in my Korean birth family I found to be at the polar opposite end of the spectrum. They were horrified by my lack of feminine grooming, which is considered essential in Korea’s historically patriarchal and conservative society. Much of my time reuniting with them was spent with their attempts to ‘fix me’, make me look like I’d never left Korea, and essentially feminize me according to Korea’s societal standards. Attempting to navigate both ideas of gender, as an adult, continues to be a challenge. Mostly because I know both strong opinions come from women who equally believe they are expressing love towards me. But in many ways they are confining me. Essentially, they are both clouding the road of me defining my own identity with their fixed images of what it means to be a woman.”

CRIMES OF THE HEART
Through June 10
Bloomington Civic Theatre,
1800 W. Old Shakopee Rd.,
Bloomington
(952) 563-8575
www.bloomingtoncivictheatre.org

Director Wendy Lehr says Beth Henley’s 1982 Pulitzer Prize-winning comedy “is at heart—a play about family. The three Magrath sisters and their vituperative cousin, Chick (Billie Jo Konze) share a painful history. The sisters reunite by way of an extraordinary circumstance – Babe (Erin Mae Johnson) who has just shot her husband and middle sister, Meg (Lindsay Marcy), comes home for the first time in five years with all kinds of baggage. The play takes place on eldest sister Lenny’s (Tracie Hodgdon) birthday, October 23, 1974, possibly symbolic of

the re-birthday ahead for all the sisters.”

When you see the play, bear in mind, as the director points out, that “the ’70s were not the ’60s. The summer of love was long gone and the national naivete regarding the unimpeachability of the president came crashing to an end. But the ’60s movements created new freedoms and the ’70s hinted at the need for responsibility.”

Lehr describes “the style is in the grand tradition of 20th Century Southern writers. In the South, family roots go deep and opinions are not often withheld. Attention to detail creates flashes of understanding, often to great comic effect. For example: Babe: ..She’s turning into Old Grandmama.

Meg: You think so?

Babe: More and more. Do you know she’s taken to wearing Old Grandmama’s torn sunhat and her green garden gloves?

Meg: Those old lime green ones?
Babe: Yeah; she works out in the garden wearing the lime green gloves of a dead woman. Imagine wearing those gloves on your hands.

In five lines we get information, insight, poetry, a laugh and a chill. To me, an exchange like this is very reminiscent of the short stories of Eudora Welty – another native, as is Henley, of Mississippi where *Crimes of the Heart* is set. Probably the most seismic incident in the play is why Babe tried to kill her husband. Without a full spoiler alert it has to do with her defending a black teenager. Her sister responds “I didn’t even know you were a liberal.”

AN ABSOLUTE TURKEY (LE DINDON)
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www.gremlin-theatre.org

He may not be as well known to the average educated American as other European



Keigwin + Company. Photo by Matthew Murphy

playwrights like Henrik Ibsen and Anton Chekhov, but Georges Feydeau (1862-1921) is regarded as one of world theater’s great masters of farce. His complex twists and turns were considered light fare during the time he wrote, the Belle Epoque, a vibrant period glorified in Woody Allen’s recent film gem, *Midnight in Paris* and in Ernest Hemingway’s memoir sketches, *A Moveable Feast*. Those were the decades before World War I, when the Moulin Rouge and Folies Bergere helped define Paris as the world capitol of sensuality and fun. To this very day, puritanical Americans are thrown to stigmatize France as a den of iniquity and decadence, and the Belle Epoque reinforced that stereotype. That stigma has been embraced even in recent years by big-spending, pro-war Americans who raged over France’s reticence to join us in the Iraq War. Remember ‘Freedom Fries’?

Though Feydeau is best known on these shores for *A Flea in Her Ear* (1907), St. Paul’s Gremlin Theatre took notice of *An Absolute Turkey* which was commissioned by London’s esteemed Globe Theatre translated from Feydeau’s *Le Dindon* (1896). It’s always a good thing when lesser known, well written works by major writers get their chance to shine.

Director Brian Balcom, a masterful director of boldly sexual plays calls Feydeau’s classic “a hilarious sex farce about the indiscretions of the affluent Parisian lifestyle. Feydeau’s plays are about lust and the insanities it produces as the humor relies on characters who pursue their desires with a complete disregard for decency. It is this blind passion that drives them into such complex and chaotic quagmires. For being written at the turn of the century, the play is rather even-handed when it comes to sexual exploits. The female characters are just as advantageous as the men. No one is without desire or misdeed.”

KEIGWIN + COMPANY

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At the Cowles, the Keigwin troupe’s presentation will include *Mattress Suite*, six short dances that explore human sexuality and the yearning for love; *Runaway*, which was inspired by the fashion scene, and *Megalopolis*, which imagines club culture in a futuristic city. Given his notable theatre choreography in work that addresses the human body and its relationship to Eros, you can be sure that Keigwin’s Minnesota debut will push the boundaries. And we like that up here. ■

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MINNESOTA LYNX

DRAFT

[Taj McWilliams-Franklin]



It's been a whirlwind of a year for the championship Minnesota Lynx team. And things are about to get a whole lot crazier. With key members of the team returning again, the Lynx have also added a lot of new players. In the 2012, draft they had six draft choices,

including the number three pick and five in the top twenty.

The number three choice was Devereaux Peters, a six-foot-two power forward from Notre Dame. Peters was shocked and excited to be chosen by the Lynx. In most mock drafts, she wasn't in the top five prospects lists. However, Peters had an impressive career with Notre Dame averaging 10.2 points and 7.3 rebounds. She was also impressive with her career averages in assists, blocks, and steals.

The team is looking for her to learn from the 41-year-old Taj McWilliams-Franklin. Taj has said that she is getting old and might need replacing soon. Peters has other impressive stats including being a two-time Big East defensive player of the year, All-Big East first team member, and the only player in the Big East this season to rank in the top ten in the conference in three major defensive categories: first in rebounding, third in blocked shots, and ninth in steals.

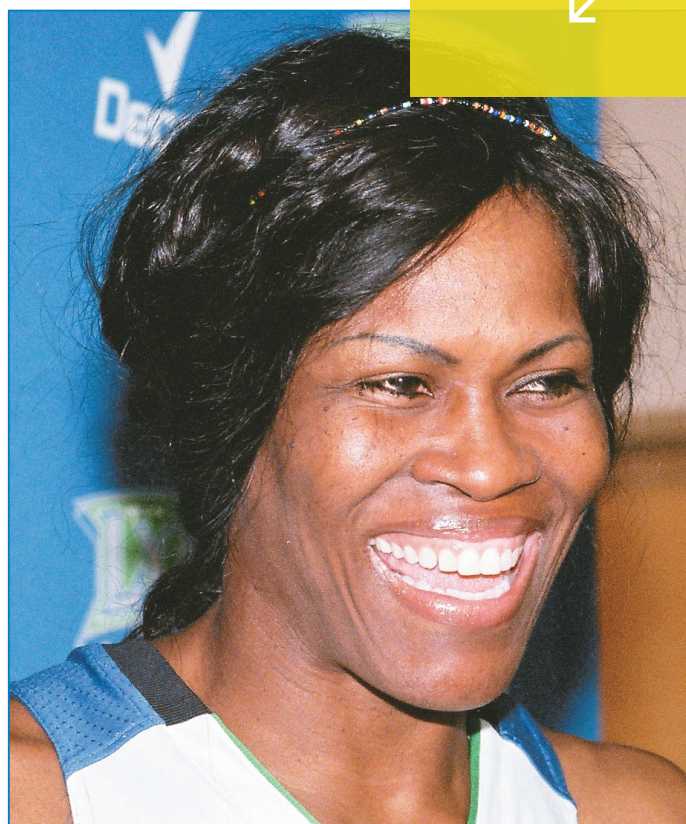


Photo by Sophia Hantzes

This past year, Peters helped her team reach the NCAA Championship game for the second year in a row. She is thrilled to be here. The Lynx were looking for someone in the draft that they could choose that was not only a good player but also a selfless player. The Lynx already have an amazing roster so they wanted someone who could come in and know their role on the team wasn't going to be the star like they were in college. And the Lynx feel that Peters is the perfect fit ➡

Continued on page 44

Naturally Urban

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[Devereaux Peters]



[Julie Wojta]



Photos by Sophia Hantzes

for this with her already selfless play at Notre Dame. She is already good, but this is where the learning from Taj will come into play.

There are five other players that the Lynx have selected from this year's draft. They had the pick numbers 12, 18, 19, 20, and 31. Five out of six of their draft picks this year were acquired by trades. With the number 12 pick, the Lynx chose Damiris Dantas out of Spain. With the number 18 pick, the Lynx chose Julie Wojta out of Green Bay. With 19, the Lynx took Kayla Standish from Gonzaga. With the 20th pick, they took Nika Baric out of Russia. And rounding out the Lynx draft choices was the 31st pick, Jacki Gemelos out of USC.

The only problem with so many picks is that the Lynx are bringing back almost their whole roster from last season. The Lynx have only one open spot, so there will be some competition during camp. Three of the new players will be deferred so that they can hopefully develop and join the team in future seasons. These picks are Dantas, Baric, and Gemelos; the first two because they are international and the third because of a knee injury. The Lynx have talked about a possible arrival after the 2016 Olympics. This may seem far away but the players are only 19 now, so they will still be active and youthful then.

These other five draft picks also have



[Erin Thorn]

pretty impressive stats throughout their basketball careers thus far. Dantas was the 2011 MVP of the FIBA u19 World Championships in Chile. This was an effort that led Brazil to third place. This past season, she has averaged 13.1 points and 7 rebounds with the Spanish Liga Femenina de Balcesto.

Wojta was pretty impressive last season, leading her league with 19.5 points and 3.8 steals. She lead the team to its first Sweet Sixteen appearance ever, eventually losing to the championship Baylor team.

Standish led the Gonzaga Bulldogs last season with 16.4 points, 7.5 rebounds, and 1.5 blocks per game last season. She ended

up on the All-West Coast Conference First Team for two consecutive seasons.

Baric has been playing overseas with Lynx Seimone Augustus on a team in Russia. She has been averaging 4.7 points and 2.3 assists while in Russia. Previously, Baric played for Slovenia, including in the 2011 FIBA U19 World Championships.

And last but not least, Gemelos. She averaged 11 points and 7.3 rebounds a game before a season ending injury. In 2011 however she was named to the 2011 All-Pac-10 Honorable Mention selection.

So, the Lynx will have some work cut out for them in camp this season. They have drafted six talented athletes who could eventually make a difference on this championship team. The season is coming up soon with the first game on May 20th at home. Be sure to check out the game to see which girls make the team and to see the WNBA Champions try to repeat!

As of press time, Standish has been cut from the Lynx roster. Added to the roster since the draft are rookie players Brittany Rayburn and Queralt Casas, and veteran player Erin Thorn. □



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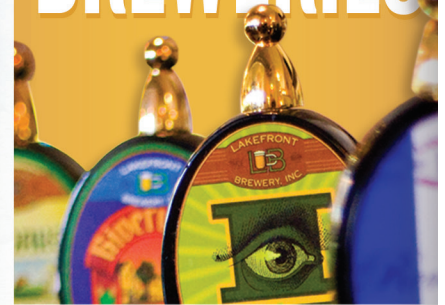
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Photo courtesy of Tourist Office for Flanders - Brussels and www.sxc.hu.

BRUSSELICIOUS

It's Yummy Year in Brussels

BRUSSELICIOUS: There, you've said it. And that's the hard part. The eating is easy. The year 2012 has been declared the Gourmet Year in Belgium's capital, with a menu of special activities to showcase what this quintessentially charming city has always done so well. It shines with everything from its galaxy of Michelin-starred cafes to street stands offering waffles or frites and mussels. And, did anyone mention chocolate?

But let's start out at Mmmmh! (www.Mmmmh.be), a combo of food, wine and kitchenware shops which also offers classes, including one in what its ringleader calls "the most hated of vegetables"—you guessed it: Brussels sprouts.

No longer the bad boy of the garden patch, four of the city's leading restaurant chefs taught us, hands on, to prepare it in trendy, new ways: thin-sliced and crispy, with crab and crème fraîche, as a starter; wrapped with other crunchies, in rice paper atop seabass as a superior spring roll; paired with diced potatoes in a rich Gorgonzola sauce for pasta; and, as an homage to trendy

molecular cuisine, cooked with potatoes in chicken stock, then whipped till creamy and siphoned into mousse over sausage slices—an avant update of the Belgian granny dish, stoemp (potatoes and leeks with sausage).

As literal icing on the cake, the session ended with a treat from the iconic chocolatier/pastry shop Wittamer, which created bite-sized, green-frosted cream puffs disguised as you-know-what. Meanwhile, around town, you'll spot super-sized icons of Brussels food products created by artists—an uber-mussel, a maxi-cone of frites, a sprout almost as big as a house.

Not your cup of chocolate? Then sign on for a class at Cooking Time (www.cooking-time.be), where chefs help guests prepare a lunch of typical Belgian products: today, ivory cod paired with shiny mussels and a sleek sabayon sauce, aside a mold of mashed potatoes melded with leeks. And for dessert, a dice of apples and beets (!) capped by ice cream made of beer—yes beer: another reason for a foodie pilgrimage.

There are 250 breweries in this tiny

country, sporting over 2,000 beers—a greater variety than in any other land: Trappist, produced by monks, strong and rich and yeasty, such as Chimay; Lambic (Greuze), fermented from natural yeasts floating in the air, deliciously sour and toasty; and specialty beers such as Kriek, tasting like a cherry Lifesaver, swell with desserts; Kwak, an amber ale; and pilseners such as Duvel, strong as the devil, indeed.

Classes in chocolate-making are offered at Gerbaud, from tempering and molding to the best part, tasting: chocolates from a variety of continents and cocoa-butter strengths and fillings stretching from nuts and fruits to candied ginger.

Sign on for a walking tour (www.vizit.be) with nibble stops at a chocolatier, a bakery, cheese shop and seafood stand. Or jump on the Brusselicious Tram Experience for a city tour while savoring a three-course dinner with wines, prepared by a rotation of Michelin-starred chefs (85 euros). Hotels have gotten into the game by offering breakfast buffets of at least eight local products. Ours

at the Royal Windsor careened from artisan cheeses and cold cuts to organic fruits and jams, plus another Belgian icon, waffles.

Time for dinner! To capture the essence of today's thinking, we chose the year-old Alexandre, where chef Alexandre Dionisio has captured a Michelin star for the likes of his five (plus, plus)-course menu (85 euro) in his stylish lime-and-black dining room: first a parsnip veloute with fume of boudin noir sausage, eels and cockles, exquisitely presented; then scallops paired with veal cheek preceding a choice of venison with poached pears and polenta or sea bass with risotto, pesto, chorizo, leeks and smoked peppers; then chocolate ganache and orange jam flavoring sponge cake; and finally, coconut milk and lemon with Thai basil ice and sesame crumbles. Life is good!

And just as good on our evening at Va Doux Vent, an Art Nouveau bistro (Brussels excels in the style) newly launched by a trio of young cooking tyros: no star yet—it's too new—but keep tuned. Here our six-course dinner (69 euros) vaulted from carpaccio of scallops and mango with coconut and lemon to fish with celery foam; then roast quail with cabbage, foie gras and essence of parsley and green tea, followed by rabbit three ways. Next, samosas plumped by Belgian cheeses paired with leek salad, and finally, a trio of apple sweets.

And now, to walk it off. Between meals, the city offers a visual feast, leading off with Ground Zero, the Grand'Place. Hemmed by lacy, gilded Gothic structures—town hall, guild houses-turned-cafes—the plaza, Europe's finest, must be where Disney got his inspiration for a spire-lit fairyland. Cobble streets trail off in every direction, leading to the naughty-boy statue Mannekin Pis (yes, that's what he's doing), the classy Galeries St.-Hubert shopping arcade; and churches like Gothic St. Nicholas, sporting a Rubens painting; ornate St. Jean-Baptiste; and Ste. Catherine with her Black Madonna, near the crumbling towers of the medieval city wall.

Walk uphill, and upscale, to the Upper Town, anchored by Place du Grand Sablon, whose Art Nouveau townhouses now house elegant chocolatiers, cafes, galleries such as the one dedicated to Tintin (there's also a comic strip museum honoring this local hero), vintage and antiques shops. The outdoor stalls of an antiques market hems the church of Notre Dame du Sablon each weekend. Stop in the church itself to savor its glittering stained-glass windows.

Then head over a few blocks to the Museum Quarter, where the Royal Museums



(Clockwise from top left) Cookie shop. The Tram Experience. 3-course dinner during a 2 hour city tour. Fancy historic guildhouses line Brussels Grand' Place. Photos by Carla Waldemar

of Beaux Arts boasts three must-see collections. The first is dedicated to the mesmerizing works of homeboy surrealist Magritte—a black box inscribed with his enigmatic quotations (“Poetry is a pipe”) amid the art. Next, the Modern Art collection, and finally, the Art Ancien—a celebration of Flemish masters, including Hieronymous Bosch (maybe the original Surrealist), Jan Breughel (same, as evidenced in the sea monsters devouring a shower of Fallen Angels and his landscapes of lusty burghers), Memling's serene Virgin, Cranach's sexy Venus.

Time to go! For info on Brusellicious—chocolate week, chip stand festival, picnics in the park and much, much more—visit www.brussellicious.be. For general info, see www.visitflanders.us. □



Waiter at Café Mort Subite. Photo courtesy of Tourist Office for Flanders - Brussels.

SIDEBAR

St.-Jacques District, near the Grand'Place is the Rainbow District, seconded by Rue du Marche-au-Charbon: more bars, cafes and shops.

Events:

Gay Pride May 11-12, 2012

Big La Demense: gay parties Easter and All Saints Day weekends (www.lademence.com)

GLBT Film Festival (www.fglb.org); pink screen festival Nov. 2012 (www.pinkscreen.org)

The Gay Map showcases the cool, gay-friendly hits of the city (f.boury@visitbrussels.be or www.visitbrussels.be/gay); see also the Gay Brussels Facebook page.



GLBT GREETING CARDS

ENTREPRENEUR DEBRA PESEK glows as she talks about her line called “Too plus Too” of GLBT greeting cards. But it was during a dimmer period of her life that the inspiration struck. A few years ago, lying in bed recovering from treatment leukemia, she had an epiphany; there were no cards designed especially for the gay and lesbian population.

“It just came to me in the middle of the night,” she says. Describing herself as a spiritual person, she thought, “this is something I can do.”

But going from epiphany to reality proved harder than she anticipated. Fortunately, Pesek has a background in aesthetics, having worked in interior design, repurposing furniture, and house and garden television.

Her business partner, Jeff Pomerleau, came a little further out of his comfort zone in the masonry business to join Debra on the venture. “We talked to a couple of people and they thought it was a really good idea so we said okay let's go for it,” he says.

From picking type fonts, color schemes, hiring illustrators and writing the cards themselves with a little help from friends and family, the two produced a line of artful, classy, witty, and insightful cards geared to the GLBT community.

It is a business venture colored by passion and a cause they both believe in. Says Debra, “I have lots of friends and family members who are gay and lesbian so they should have a card just like everybody else and if you were a mother and had ➔➔

Continued on page 50



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a daughter who was a lesbian or a son that was gay I couldn't go buy a card for them for their birthday or their partner of if they were getting married adopting a child or whatever it happened to be so I think they should have cards just like everyone else."

Jeff nods, "I just believe in equality" "No matter what," adds Debra.

And no matter what, the two are committed to taking their business to the mainstream starting in the Big Apple. Debra says they are signed up for the

New York Stationary Show slated for May 20th through the 24th. With nearly 900 booths and 10,000 people expected to attend everyone from the grand daddies like American Greeting and Hallmark to the smaller time boutique artists will be there to get exposure, to network and to find suppliers.

Attending is a huge commitment according to Debra, but she says she and Jeff wanted to "go out there and saturate the market ahead of time."

As we talk, my eyes are continuously

drawn to the stack of samples Jeff and Debra have laid out on the coffee table. Each one beautifully designed, humorous and unique. I ask them to pick out a few favorites. With so many it's hard to choose but Debra pulls one from the pile with a caricature of King Henry the Eight on the front and the line "Henry the Eight had six wives." On the inside, "My sister just wants one."

Jeff passed me one with a cartoon of Pinocchio with his nose growing and the line, "I like girls I like girls I like girls."

I pick up one with a silhouette of two beautiful women on the front and the phrase "You know I'm not a lesbian..." inside, "Oh no? You were much more interesting when you were" and I can't help but laugh.

Debra laughs along, saying "We are trying to be funny, not to make fun of people but we have to laugh at ourselves."

Some are more subtle, two men's shaving brushes in a jar, or two toothbrushes with bows in toothbrush holder together. Some simple, with two female figures, "In the beginning there was Anna and Eve" or two male figures "In the beginning there was Adam and Steve."

No matter the occasion or sentiment, Debra and Jeff have the perfect card for those who may not be able to find just what they are looking for in the greeting card aisles of their local drugstore.

No matter where their business takes them it seems the two have already found success. "I believe we are doing a good thing so we'll take it for a ride," says Debra. Jeff agrees, "Everything has been positive, it's been exciting"

The positively exciting line is soon to be available via website, in the meantime the cards can be found at the Guild, an eclectic shop owned by Debra at 4414 Excelsior Blvd in St. Louis Park. ■



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Elizabeth (left) and Karla: Bossy. Photos by Andy Lien

Growing Bossy Acres

RAIN, tomatoes, ticks, and weeds: these are our date night conversation topics lately.

While they might not sound romantic to some, being able to chat about those farm details is actually the realization of a dream for both my partner, Karla Pankow, and me, and we'll gladly pull weeds all day and then talk about it over sushi at Bagu later.

About a year ago, we started our own

farm, jokingly named after the attribute we felt we had in common. Bossy Acres has become an all-consuming, joyful, challenging, exhausting, and uplifting adventure that feels as if it's gaining momentum daily.

In our wee South Minneapolis bungalow, we have seeders and buckets wedged next to the couch, seed potatoes stretched across the dining room table, and books on bees

and soil and food politics teetering in stacks wherever there's room. Our hands are permanently crusted with dirt as if we'd gotten odd, hairline tattoos across our fingers.

As I write this, there are 15 flats of lettuces outside in our blazing yellow van (nicknamed the "Bossy Banana"), and we're hoping that some volunteers make the trek to our rented acres in Dayton to help ➔

Continued on page 54



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us put the greens in the ground. In other words: we've created a pretty kickass life, and we're excited to see what comes next. Even if it involves ticks.

Playing in the Mud

Our path together began, improbably enough, in a tiny village in Zambia, Africa. We'd both signed up for a Habitat for Humanity trip that turned out to be an all-women crew building a cinderblock house for a family there.

For two weeks, we luxuriated in the beauty of a sun-scorched landscape without electricity, running water, or bathrooms. Both Karla and I loved the simplicity and sustainability of life in a place where we had to bring our own garbage bags because the residents never made trash. Every night, the village's children came and danced with us, while we drank warm beer from chipped tea cups and admired the thick blanket of stars.

From the way that we could fall in love during a time when we each used about two cups of water to shower every day, I suppose we should have known we'd make good partners. After all, not everyone is up for flirting when they're mixing cement by hand, or trying to catch a chicken for dinner (seriously), but we both thrived in that environment. We snuck behind our group's sleeping hut for a single, clandestine kiss like kids trying to ditch a chaperone.

From then on, we became inseparable, which was tricky since we lived 600 miles apart. I'd drive to Michigan whenever I could, grateful for my freedom as a freelance journalist, and Karla would fly here on random weekends when she could escape the shackles of her job as a pharmaceutical rep. As anyone in a long distance relationship knows, the situation can be dreary. There are too many meaningful, woeful goodbyes and they always seem to outnumber the hellos. When you're together, there's a distant clock ticking somewhere, and you feel the slight pressure of it: three more days together...now two...now none until next time. Another goodbye.

Then, a get-out-of-long-distance-free card arrived: Karla was laid off from her pharma job, right about the time that she'd been do-

ing a weekend internship at an organic farm. Although I'm more of a gradual change kind of girl, Karla has always been the jump-right-in kind that I admire, and she saw the lay-off as a chance to change not just her job, but her entire life. She packed up a U-Haul and her two dogs and moved to Minnesota, determined that we could now live out our "someday" dream of having a farm.

Before meeting Karla, I had trouble keeping a houseplant alive. The last vegetable I'd grown myself had been in a paper cup for a 3rd grade science project. I think it was a carrot, and it didn't turn out well. But I was eager to take on this new adventure, even if it meant I'd have nearly everything to learn. So, I took a deep breath, cleared out plenty of drawer space, bought some books on farm management, and we got Bossy.

Pharma to Farm

When thinking about our farm's start, Karla and I had the bucolic visions that any beginning farmers probably envision: our own little acreage with chickens and goats, organic vegetables growing lush and perfectly (without weeds or pests, of course), and a root cellar filled with salsas and sauces we'd canned ourselves.

Well, we haven't completely given up on that idyllic possibility, but we've got miles to go before putting our names on that rural mailbox.

With land prices averaging about \$7,000 per acre, we decided to keep my house and rent land instead. Fortunately, we found a farmer about 30 miles away who had land that hasn't been sprayed with pesticides, and he shared our views about the importance of organic practices.

Although we couldn't have the physical farm that we wanted, we knew that Bossy Acres was about more than a place, and even about more than the vegetables we'd grow. We wanted a farm that was involved with the community and helped to create a more nourishing food system for everyone. The community supported agriculture (CSA) model was one we'd both admired, and I was the drop-site coordinator for a CSA farm for five years before the Bossy kickstart, so I had some (admittedly limited) exposure to

the nuances of the system.

With our goals in place, the seeds got ordered, and Karla built a website (www.bossy-acres.com), started a Facebook page, and became a powerhouse on Twitter. Through social media marketing, we began creating buzz about the farm and selling CSA shares, even though at that point we hadn't grown a single vegetable. But that changed fast: as a winter project, Karla started growing pea shoots and sunflower shoots, and we set up a table at a few indoor winter farmers markets.

The Bossy was at full simmer, but it wasn't until we began starting our main season seeds at our greenhouse space in St. Paul that I felt that true sense of urgency that comes with farming. It's like a beautiful, sonorous bell that lets you know you're already late.

Field Days

As we get ready for our first full season, coming up on a year in business, we already feel that our vision of a community-supported farm is being realized. Our CSA is sold out, and we look forward to a busy season as vendors at the Fulton Farmers Market. Volunteers and CSA members are pinning down dates to come help us plant and harvest (but we can always use more help, so look up volunteer details on our website!).

The farm's timing seems fortuitous as well—sustainable agriculture, and particularly urban farming, are taking off here in a way that seems important. Systems are falling into place for supporting local food and the "know your farmer, know your food" movement is like a rising tide, lifting us all toward a better relationship with what's on our plates.

In many ways, Bossy Acres is also a natural extension of that time in Zambia, when we felt so much closer to the ground. Granted, that partially means we were dirty all the time, but it also means we could feel the power of a community coming together, and the lure of a way of life where there was no garbage, literally or figuratively.

Karla and I see Bossy Acres as a big ol' fabulous adventure together, and it's one that we can share with so many other people. And what's more boss than that? ■

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Lethe Press - \$18.00

Number six of Abramson's Beach Reading Mystery series takes us into the layers and depths of protagonist Tim Snow's psychic powers. He's

used them before, but now they're being amped up x-fold in new and ingenious ways. Recruited into a group of other HIV patients by a shadowy research outfit claiming to use psychics to find and prevent suicides, Tim is trance-linked via Neutriva, a new AIDS drug, with an elderly fortune teller, a street person, and others to form a sort of psychic hive mind. But something's wrong; the trials are not all they seem. Tim's lover Nick and the regular cast appear, along with a guardian angel and some sweet closures. This satisfying longer volume gives free rein to Abramson's masterful plot weaving.

**KING PERRY**

Edmond Manning
Dreamspinner Press - \$17.99

How would you respond to "[You] are cordially invited on a King Weekend," and assurance that if you spend the next forty hours following Vin Vanbly's "every command," your

"life will change in surprising ways." Well, Perry Mangin does, and undergoes a night hidden on Alcatraz; a duck-napping in a swank hotel and ocean blowjobs. Vanbly leads Perry to his Kingship, which has to do with Perry's painter father whose works were being shown in the gallery show where the two met. But who is Vanbly, and what are his motives? Dark flashes from his own past, involving an abuser named Billy, suggest there is more to learn—and local author Manning hints at coming novels which will reveal more about Vin and future kings.

**THE BIG CAT NAP**

Rita Mae Brown & Sneaky Pie Brown
Bantam - \$26

For ailurophile whodunit fans, *The Big Cat Nap* will be a special treat, marking the twentieth anniversary of Brown's Mrs. Murphy Mysteries involving Mary "Harry" Haristeen,

tiger cat Mrs. Murphy, and their furry collaborators Pewter (cat), and Tee Tucker (dog). Not only are too many car accidents happening around tiny Crozet, Virginia, but a lot of car mechanics are dying off as well. Harry, whose desire to ferret out the truth has led her into the previous nineteen adventures, sets out again on a danger-laden search for a killer—or killers. Brown has a knack for focusing big issues on Crozet for solution, and this time big insurance company malfeasance falls under Harry's scrutiny. Michael Gellatly's black and white illustrations make the purr-fect accompaniment.

**OPERATION MARRIAGE**

Cynthia Chin-Lee; Illustrated Lee Lyon
Reach and Teach - \$14.95

Illustrated in a most charming, sketchy/accurate wash technique by Lee Lyon, Chin-Lee's text follows the true story of a California pre-Prop 8 family. Eight-year old Alex's best

friend, Zach, announces that he can no longer be her best friend since her parents aren't married. Alex and little brother Nicky set in motion "Operation Marriage" to convince Mamma Kathy and Mamma Lee to tie the knot. They're successful, and the wedding takes place, offering readers a satisfying conclusion. But the book's power is in portraying how the debate affects all children: Alex pedals by Zach's house where his father is setting up a "Yes on Prop 8" sign; Zach's lingering words, "My dad says two women can't be married." Prop 8 passed; the story's not over.

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BIGGAYNEWS.COM: YOUR GLBT WORLD NEWS!

**1-MEXICO****Libertarian Nominee Slams Republicans For Gay Spokesman Flap**

BuzzFeed.com reports that new Libertarian Party nominee Gary Johnson accused the Republicans of wrongdoing for the situation surrounding Mitt Romney's openly gay foreign policy spokesman Richard Grenell. Johnson said: "It speaks volumes to the intolerance that continues to be present in the Republican Party. I believe the majority of Americans are fiscally responsible and socially tolerant. I believe the majority of Americans could care less about whether or not there is a gay individual working in the Romney campaign. The activists driving that agenda. That intolerance is why the world vilifies Republicans."

2-USA**Columnist Dan Savage Stands By Comments On "Bullshit In The Bible"**

CNN reports that Dan Savage is standing by his line that "we can learn to ignore the bullshit in the Bible about gay people," a comment that prompted some high-school students at a conference to walk away from the anti-bullying speech. Teacher Rick Tuttle said: "It became very hostile toward Christianity, to the point that many students did walk out, including some of my students." Savage explained: "I was not attacking the faith in which I was raised. I was attacking the argument that gay people must be discriminated against because it says right there in the Bible that being gay is wrong."

BigGayNews from Massachusetts:**John Kerry Letter Backs Gay Couple**

The Salem News reports that Senator John Kerry has written a letter to the Department of Homeland Security in support of a young married binational lesbian couple from Beverly. One of the women faces deportation to her native Pakistan because of the federal government's Defense of Marriage Act's definition of marriage as between a man and a woman. Kerry said: "She is certain that if she is forced to return to Pakistan, her life will be in danger, not only because of her sexual orientation and her marriage to a United States citizen, but for religious reasons as well." The Defense of Marriage Act is still enforced in the U.S. even though the Obama administration announced in 2011 that it will no longer defend the constitutionality of the law in court.

BigGayNews from New Jersey:**Transgender Woman Denied Mammogram Wins Battle**

Transgender women and men are often denied routine care. The New York Daily News reports that 44-year-old transgender woman Beth Scott won a settlement

against her health insurance carrier after being denied coverage for a routine mammogram. Health provider Aetna stated a policy exclusion for treatments related to sex reassignment. Beth Scott had developed breasts after undergoing hormone therapy, and she had been advised her to seek the breast cancer check. Her employer agreed to cover Scott's future mammograms as well as prostate exams.

BigGayNews from Tennessee :**Tennessee "Don't Say Gay" Bill To Get Axed**

Huffington Post reports that a key Republican sponsor said he simply won't bring a bill meant to eliminate public school discussion of gay issues. State Rep. Joey Hensley said: "With that assurance and the opposition of some people who didn't want to vote on it, I've decided simply not to bring it up." The wording of the legislation read "[N]o public elementary or middle school shall provide any instruction or material that discusses sexual orientation other than heterosexuality." The state of Missouri is currently considering its own "don't say gay" legislation.

3-UNITED KINGDOM**BigGayNews from the United Kingdom:****Cameron Prepared to Back Down on Support for Gay Marriage Law**

The Daily Mail reports that Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron is expected to put on hold his plans to legalize gay marriage after his party's disappointing performance in local elections. Cameron's support for gay marriage is controversial among backbenchers who would rather focus on the really important issues. A Cardinal by the name of Keith O'Brien has also criticized Cameron for "attempting to redefine marriage for a small minority of activists" and proposing reforms that would "shame the United Kingdom in the eyes of the world."

BigGayNews from England :**Vatican Rep Wants Alliance With Jews, Muslims, to Combat Gay Marriage**

JewishPress.com reports that a Vatican representative to Great Britain, Archbishop Antonio Mennini, wants Jews and Muslims to unite with Christians to fight the proposition of legalizing gay marriage in England. Mennini said: "It seems to me that, concerning the institution of marriage, and indeed the sanctity of human life, we have much in common with the position of the Jewish community, the Chief Rabbi and many of the more significant representatives of Islam." Equalities Minister Lynne Featherstone is considering legalizing gay marriage in the UK. Archbishop Peter Smith said: "We will work with anyone who agrees with us that to redefine marriage is not a good thing for society and will lead to more confusion."

BigGayNews from England :**Doctors Neglect Gay and Bisexual Men**

OnMedica reports that a survey showed doctors should be reminded of their duty to avoid neglecting the health needs of gay and bisexual men. Survey respondents averaged higher levels of domestic abuse, mental illness, and use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs. About 50% gay and bisexual men are said to have taken drugs in the last twelve months, compared with 12% of men overall. How many gay and bisexual men have ever discussed prostate or bowel cancer with a healthcare professional? Only 10% have.

4-AUSTRALIA**BigGayNews from Australia:****Gays Help Ease Sperm Shortage For Aspiring Mothers**

The Sydney Morning Herald reports that a recruitment drive aimed at gays has contributed to a meaningful reduction in the waiting times for Australian women seeking a sperm donor in their bid to get pregnant. Australian women were waiting up to 18 months for donor sperm about a year ago. The waiting time has decreased to about eight weeks, thanks partly to a local donor drive that targeted gay men.

BigGayNews from Australia:**"Being gay is like being left handed"**

Australia's news.com reports that former High Court judge Michael Kirby told a federal parliamentary inquiry into same-sex marriage that he and his brother were both born with traits that set them apart from the mainstream. Justice Kirby said: "It's like being left-handed. My brother is left-handed and I was gay. I rose to be one of the significant judicial citizens of this country, but I was always a second-class citizen." Kirby has had a 43-year relationship with his partner.

He says society must come to terms with the fact that sexual orientation is not an anti-social choice, but rather a personality trait.

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Randi and Phil Reitan

RANDI AND PHIL Reitan are Eden Prairie residents and longtime GLBT allies. Below, they share a little about their family and their fierce opposition to the marriage amendment this fall.

Lavender Magazine: How has your experience as a parent influenced your views supporting marriage equality?

Randi Reitan: Phil and I have been blessed with a wonderful marriage. This July we will celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary. One of the greatest joys we shared as parents was watching our 3 oldest children find love and get married.

We want our gay son Jacob to have the same experience when he finds a wonderful man to be his partner in life. We want him to get married like we did and each of his siblings did. We want him to celebrate his love with a wedding and grow old with the man he loves.

LM: Why is it important to defeat this amendment in Minnesota?

RR: This amendment would use the Minnesota constitution to deny rights rather than grant them. It would be devastating for a state that prides itself as a wonderful place to live and raise a family.

One of the blessings of working for gay rights for 14 years is watching our country move in a welcoming direction. Progress is being made because people are talking and sharing their stories. This amendment is about stopping that great conversation.

LM: As a Minnesotan, how do you think this amendment would change your community?

RR: We worked hard last year to keep the amendment off the ballot because we knew what a campaign like this would do to Minnesota. I worry about young gay teens who will hear such hurtful rhetoric about their lives. The most recent example is the marriage presentation by the Archdiocese at DeLaSalle High School where students were in tears.

LM: How has your faith shaped your support for marriage equality?



Randi and Phil Reitan with their son, Jacob.
Photo by Hubert Bonnet

RR: Our faith is central to our life. It is a faith that loves and includes all people, that looks to the love and gracious welcome of Jesus.

The discrimination Jacob faced after he came out made us activists. We felt the pain as parents when a pastor in our Lutheran denomination said it was sick and sinful to be gay. He told us our son would live a dark sad life of sin if he didn't change. It was important to us as parents and as Christians to confront those untruths. That is why we told our story in the film, *For the Bible Tells Me So*. When the film was released, we heard from people across the country who, for the first time, heard God's love spoken to them as a gay person.

We must confront the anti-gay messages in this amendment battle. We must see sexual orientation as a gift from God and that marriage is a strong foundation for *all* families. There are many faith communities that welcome all couples to make promises of faithfulness and love. May they speak their welcome loudly.

LM: Is there additional advice you would give to get involved in the movement to ensure marriage is respected for all couples?

RR: When Jake first came out, we needed to first educate ourselves. We watched Jake start the first gay-straight alliance at his high school, and we knew we also needed to work for equality. Jacob led us. We encourage young people to lead their parents on this issue.

There are many opportunities to be involved and it is critical that we act now. Last May when we first knew this amendment would be on our ballots, I ordered 1,000 rainbow stick flags to share with people. I wanted people to plant them in their summer flower pots letting their neighbors know their home was one that celebrated marriage equality. I was overwhelmed with requests for them and ordered 500 more. One woman walked her neighborhood and had conversations with each of her neighbors as she offered them a flag.

Philip makes a point to have a conversation with every client that comes to see him. They walk away knowing their attorney has a gay son and Philip wants marriage equality for him. It is important to find a way to have the conversations that need to take place. Hearts are moved by personal stories. There has never been a time more important for Minnesotans to be involved in a movement because this amendment would forever deny marriage to same-sex couples.

For more information on opportunities to get involved and ensure others Vote No on this hurtful amendment, contact Minnesotans United for All Families at www.mnunit-ed.org or 651-330-6852. □

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OUR VOICES



DATELAND | Jennifer Parelo

Bottled Up

I HAD my annual physical yesterday and was asked the question we all hate to answer:

Doctor: How many drinks do you have a week? 0 to 2? 3 to 5? 7 to 10? More?

Me (hopefully): A week? Or a day?

Doctor (sighing with impatience because she's asked the same question by all of her patients): A *week*.

Even though I have a physical every year and should be prepared to answer this with a smooth lie, I always stumble. I mentally perform my alcohol rationalization calculation, which is: amount of work stress + number of times I call my mother + parties I attend on a given weekend = daily number of cocktails which can be defined as "medicinal," and, thus, not applicable for the annual physical drink count.

"5!" I finally answer, hoping my enthusiasm will convince my doctor that I'm not lying.

"Try again," she says.

This time I answer more honestly. "Well, I don't drink nearly as much as my friend Phoebe," I say.

"Write that down on your little chart."

Phoebe is one of my best friends mainly because she has even less self discipline than I do. She considers hard lemonade a suitable replacement for orange juice at breakfast. She has taught her kids how to make the perfect martini and how to score a ride home from the country club if mommy has one too many wine spritzers during her poolside canasta game. And, what I

love most about her is that she never, ever makes lame excuses for hangovers or denies her love of drink.

When she was pregnant with her last child, we all stayed our distance for nine months because she is such a colossal crabbass when sober. "I don't know how anyone can raise children without a couple of drinks in them," she said, greedily pouring a vase-size goblet of champagne the day she returned home from delivering the baby.

Everyone needs a friend like Phoebe: A tipsy role model who has managed to maintain her beauty (she's a former model) and is super high-functioning (she runs her own business) even after guzzling whatever rock gut is placed in front of her at happy hour, which has inched closer to the noon hour over the years.

Phoebe and her ilk make you feel better about your own life. First, they let you know that there is a damp boundary that you have not yet crossed and probably never will. And, secondly, even if you do travel down that high-octane path, apparently, it won't kill you.

I like to call Phoebe after a rough night. Let's say I wake up after a night of too many tequila gimlets which prompted me to makeout with the party hostess right in front of her girlfriend. I can always count on Phoebe for comforting me with even worse behavior.

"Oh, honey, a drunken makeout session that resulted in a breakup of a longtime couple? That's kid's stuff," Phoebe consoles. "Last night, I sold my daughter's kidney to a guy who volunteered to get me a lime for my gin and tonic. He just picked her up to get her prepped for the operation. Jim (Phoebe's husband) is furious. But it's his own fault for not getting off his lazy ass and fetching me the lime from the bar himself."

Back at my doctor's office, my physician put down her clipboard, went to her medicine refrigerator and pulled out a split of prosecco. We click glasses over another year of willful self-denial, and I promised to never drink while taking prescription medicine. And since she doesn't prescribe me any, I know it will be an easy promise to keep. □



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Dear Ms. Behavior:

I met a woman about three months ago who seemed too good to be true. Cindy started out to be the most attentive girlfriend ever. She sent me love letters and flowers three or four times a week. She wrote incredible poems, declaring her passion for me, gave me long backrubs, and has been a sweet and generous lover. We are both interested in film and language and architecture, and we laugh a lot together.

The problem is that Cindy has seemed somewhat distant for the past couple of weeks. When I ask her about it, she tells me that she has a lot on her mind from work. I know that she has been stressed about her job lately, but WHAT ABOUT ME? What happened to all the cards and letters and flowers? What happened to all of the attention? Is this what just happens in a relationship? Is it wrong to expect the passion to stay? If only I had not tasted the sweet nectar of love, I would not be impaled by the sword of longing.

-HOT POTATO

Dear Hot Potato:

"Tasted the sweet nectar of love?" "Impaled by the sword of Longing?" If you are quoting Cindy's poems, consider yourself lucky that she's run into a literary dry spell. Did anything precipitate Cindy's withdrawal? Cindy could be one of those approach/avoidance people who seems ca-

pable of great passion and romance just until you're hooked in. Then this type of person only gives you tiny drippings of love, just enough to make you hungry for more, keeping you in a state of constant longing, wondering what you did wrong. Her attentiveness in the beginning is like a drug; once you have it in your bloodstream, you never want to do without it again. You are the rat in the cage, anxiously pressing on a bar, hoping desperately for that pellet. You will probably soon get thin and tired, because the love pellets won't be released too frequently.

But consider this, too: Is it possible that Cindy really is just temporarily preoccupied with work, and that you're a giant black hole of neediness, unreasonable in your demands of her attention? Do you have an empty, shell of a life that you are trying to fill with the soul of another person? This can make people run for their lives.

Just in case, Ms. Behavior would strongly recommend that you do a little self-assessment and make sure you have a life. This means trying to be as happy as you can be, with or without Cindy. Once you have as many friends and activities and interests as you need, you won't spend your time counting your love letters or flowers. You will be busy writing and sending your own.

Dear Ms. Behavior:

I recently attended my first drag party,

and had a wonderful time. My friend, Joseph, lent me his fabulous scarlet silk dress for the occasion and I was a knockout.

The problem arose the night of the party. As I was getting dressed, I noticed a small, oily stain over the right breast of the gown. It smelled a little like peanut butter. I tried gently washing it out, but it didn't work, so put a faux emerald pin strategically over the spot and I wore the dress anyway. Otherwise, the dress was totally unharmed. I was very conscious of it all night, and careful not to allow anything to damage it (including the make up of other queens who all seemed to want to hug and kiss me.) But the day after I returned the dress to Joseph he called and yelled at me, and said that I had stained the dress. I told him that the spot was there before, and that that was why I had to wear a pin. He didn't believe me, and says I should have dry cleaned the dress before returning it. I don't see why I should have, because it was in the exact same condition as when he lent it to me. What do you think, Ms. Behavior?

-NEW QUEEN

Dear New Queen:

Even if you believe you had a sweat-free, scent-free night, never return an article of clothing without washing or cleaning it first. Don't be cheap. Dry clean the dress. (And remind Ms. Behavior never to lend you anything.) □

TROLÍN, UN DIABLITO ROSA



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Writers inform. They persuade. They inspire. They entertain. They pull together disparate and complex information and make it manageable. Without their words, we miss out on *Modern Family* and *60 Minutes*. We overlook our celebrities and their gossip. Actors' talents are wasted. And Anna Wintour's out of a job. Without writers, the only drama we have to bitch about is our own (and maybe Snooki's).

I'm a squishy writer. I'm no journalist. I don't break news and what I write is hardly noteworthy (or even profound), but I write nonetheless. I write because, for some reason, I think I have at least something to say. Something that will stir something inside you—that will resonate in some way.

Journalists don't create the news, nor do writers create drama; they aren't the arbiters of thought. We all are. Writers simply put it on paper to trigger an "oh yeah" in our minds. But the biggest "oh yeah" moments are the most surprising ones—the ones that come from the most unassuming places.

Nothing proves this point better than when a 10-year-old sums up the GLBT equality movement with a single thought so striking in its depth and simplicity that it moves his listeners to tears...

I recently took a trip with a friend to Cozumel for a long weekend to detox from work (and retox on sun, too much food, and alcohol). I turned my phone off while I was there. There were no computers. No Face-

book. No email. No text messages. And our only indication as to time was an occasional passerby (and vague guesses based on where the sun was in the sky).

My trip made me forget drama at home—stress at work, my perpetual and annoying bachelorhood, that random/scary seizure I had in January, the occasional bar gossip, and the marriage amendment (you know, where everyone gets to vote on the civil liberties of other human beings). Anyway, point is my trip was relaxing.

Back to Minneapolis and back to reality, the first message that popped up on my Facebook profile came from my friend Kate. She and her 10 year-old son, Bobby, had taken a trip to Colorado. While I was gone, she'd sent me a message detailing a conversation she and Bobby had on their plane ride back to Minneapolis. The following comes from Kate:

"Bobby: Mom, is Justin going to have another seizure?"

Kate: I hope not.

Bobby: Me too. (Thinks for a few minutes) Mom, why do some people hate gay people?

Kate: I don't know, Bobby. I guess people are afraid of what they don't understand.

Bobby: Well if they knew Justin they would understand. Nobody could hate him."

Bobby's point wasn't about me. He referenced me, but he was talking about all of us. He alluded to the point that the people fighting against us don't know us. They presuppose a notion that fits their agenda and run with it. They don't pursue understanding, and they don't lead with compassion. They pursue and lead with ignorance.

So after four days of forgetting the world in Mexico, a 10-year-old, not a writer, reminded me what was important (and made me cry). His comment summed up the hope I'd forgotten and ignited motivation to chase it again. He spoke to our humanity. I'm just passing it along.

In less than six months, Minnesota will pose a question to its electorate: shall we ingrain in our state constitution the prohibition of same-sex marriage? And rather than preaching why this is wrong (you are the choir, after all), I just ask you to search for the kind of motivation Bobby gave to me, rather than forget hope or pass the buck.

Please continue to speak. Encourage your friends to vote "No" in November, and join the fight by contributing resources or volunteering your time to Minnesotans United for All Families: MNUnited.org. ■



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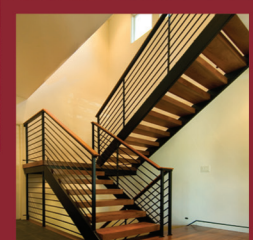
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